

To David Hughes Esq.

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR

M.D.

From W. M. Thackeray

OF THE LATE

DR. JOSEPH THACKERAY,

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OF

BEDFORD:

[EXTRACTED FROM THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE PROVINCIAL  
MEDICAL AND SURGICAL ASSOCIATION.]

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LONDON:

PRINTED BY JAMES BRIDGEWATER, SOUTH MOLTON  
STREET, OXFORD STREET.

65050 (1)



## BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR.

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Few species of literary composition excite so deep or so general an interest as biography. It is not difficult to trace to its source this prevalent feeling. The interest felt in any literary work must depend on the nature and number of the mental faculties to which it is addressed, and to the gratification of which it ministers. Now, biography, being the record of human life in its ordinary and entire course, necessarily exhibits all the mental powers, whether intellectual, moral, or animal, in their combined activity and natural results. It is the nature of all the higher faculties of the mind that each sympathises with its like; and barren of incident, indeed, must that life be, the memorial of which does not find, in every reader, some kindred feeling or talent which it can pleasurable affect.

If this view be correct, it follows that, though a biographical memoir may gratify many, it is not exactly the same pleasure which it yields to all. Each is impressed precisely according to the faculties of his mind, which are aroused to sympathetic exercise. If intellectual powers be portrayed, it is the corresponding intellect that will be most incited, and this precisely in the degree in which each reader himself possesses it. Kindness of heart most impresses those who are endued with a high degree of benevolence; and just actions afford pleasure in proportion as the mind of the person contemplating them is itself conscientious. These few illustrations suffice to explain

what the antecedent proposition is intended to convey.

The uses of biography are to preserve a memorial of the dead,—to furnish an example to the living; and its ends are attained only when both these purposes are adequately fulfilled. On both these grounds the life about to be recorded in the following brief memoir, merits the attention of survivors. A career displaying so much moral worth, so much practical virtue, deserves to be held in remembrance on its own account, as exhibiting human nature in its more amiable portraiture, while it presents an example which every right feeling, every dictate of duty, should incline us to emulate.

Dr. Joseph Thackeray, whose premature fate it is our melancholy office to record, departed this life at Bedford, on the 5th July, 1832, in the 49th year of his age, the victim of a bilious fever, and after an illness of ten days. He was born at Cambridge, on the 27th March, 1784, being the 16th child of Thos. Thackeray, an eminent medical practitioner of that town. Ere we proceed to commemorate the useful and exemplary life of the son, a passing tribute should be paid to the memory of the venerable and excellent parent. Mr. Thackeray was in extensive practice, pursued nearly to the time of his death, which took place at the advanced age of 72. He had a large family, on whom the opulence derived from his profession, with the advantage of locality, enabled him to bestow the inestimable benefit of liberal education. With a clear perception of the sources of moral worth and human happiness, he deemed mental cultivation better than riches, and secured for his children that good which was independent of casualty, and sure to cling by them under all the reverses of fortune. The wisdom of this preference was amply attested by the prosperous and most respectable career of all his sons, of whom, seven, together with three daughters, survived him. Thomas



Thackeray was a medical practitioner in the service of the India Company, from which he long since retired with an ample fortune ; Dr. William Thackeray practises as a physician at Chester ; the Rev. Elias Thackeray is rector of Dundalk, in the county of Louth ; the Rev. John Richard Thackeray holds the livings of Downham, in Norfolk, and of Hadley in Middlesex ; Dr. Frederick Thackeray practises at Cambridge, where he is physician to Addenbrook's Hospital ; and Martin Thackeray is fellow and vice-provost of King's College, Cambridge. How different would the fate of this family have been, if contracted views and narrow policy had, in order to enhance their pecuniary patrimony, withheld those advantages, which, by calling forth their own powers, enabled them to pass usefully and happily through life, and to attain each an honorable independence.

In 1793, Joseph Thackeray was, at nine years of age, placed at Eton School, where he continued for nine years, during which period his gentle manners and amiable disposition secured him the affection of his companions, while his diligence and good conduct obtained for him the cordial approbation of his teachers. With great natural humility, he possessed both moral and physical courage to support the dictates of his higher sentiments, as many anecdotes both of his boyish and riper years would exemplify. As a boy he ever protected the weak against the strong, the oppressed against the oppressor ; and in the cause of his feebler companions he sustained personal conflicts to which he would never, on his own account, have been exposed. In 1802, he was admitted a King's Scholar, of King's College, Cambridge ; and, in 1805, was elected a Fellow. In 1806, he took his degree of Bachelor of Arts, and in 1809, that of Master. On taking his bachelor's degree, he was induced, by the advice of his friends, to adopt medicine as a profession,

and, in pursuing his studies, he passed two years at Edinburgh, one at Glasgow, and two in London; after which he became a Bachelor of Physic of Cambridge, in 1812. In 1817 he afterwards completed his academic qualifications, by attaining the university degree of Doctor of Physic.

It is illustrative of the present state of the profession of physic, that though Dr. Joseph Thackeray was eligible to the highest honors of the London College of Physicians, even under its own arbitrary bye-laws, he never connected himself with that learned body, by becoming either a fellow or licentiate.

On becoming a Bachelor of Physic, with license to practise, Dr. Thackeray commenced his professional career, by settling, in 1812, at Northampton, where favourable prospects opened to him. It was not any apprehension of failure that induced him to abandon this ground, but the unsatisfied energies of his mind, for which the necessarily limited sphere of private practice furnished no adequate exercise. Conscious of powers which could embrace a far wider scope of active exertion, and possessing an innate benevolence, which incited him to employ these powers in the service of his fellow-creatures, he longed for a hospital; but, of this desire, Northampton offered no hope of an early fulfilment. In the feelings here alluded to, many belonging to his branch of the profession will fully sympathise; and most oppressive are they to all who enter on the exclusive practice of physic, without the advantages of extensive observation and cumulative experience which hospitals afford. Few are ignorant of how much of what is necessary to constitute the skilful physician, remains to be learned, after the most perfect course of elementary instruction and scholastic preparation has been completed. However extensive the literary attainments, however profound the science acquired, all combined will not



enable the practitioner either to do justice to his patients, or satisfy his own mind, unless guided, in their application, by that familiarity with the aspects and changes of disease, and that practical tact, which diligent observation of actual disease alone can give. In this respect, the fate of the young physician is one of peculiar difficulty and mortification. Through the revolution which the profession has, within the last half century, undergone, he is superseded in the treatment of all the more simple and ordinary diseases, by the general practitioner. His office is become chiefly that of consulting practitioner, to be referred to, when disease becomes intractable, or the more immediate attendant deems it expedient to divide the responsibility; and for this office, experience is the grand requisite. Yet how is the experience of the young physician to be formed, on the scanty share of practice which the present state of the profession allots to him, unless he obtain, in addition, the wider field of observation which hospitals or dispensaries supply? if he have not the good fortune to procure some such appointment, he has to endure the double mortification of feeling that all his laboriously acquired knowledge is profitless, from want of exercise; and that this inactivity, sufficiently painful in itself, directly unfits him, through the deficiency of means for extending his knowledge, for that species of practice which might, in time devolve on him. It would be a melancholy recital which should record the fate of the many ingenuous and highly cultivated minds, that have sunk under the complicated difficulties with which they have thus had to struggle. Many such, and, perhaps, not the least estimable, daily wither in their bloom, disappear, and are forgotten; while ignorance of their fate misleads others to engage in the same cheerless career, betraying them into hopes and expectations never to be realised.

It was Dr. Thackeray's happier lot to be rescued from this pitiable state, by the very energies which impelled him to seek adequate exercise for his talents in the superintendence of an hospital. His professional career may be said to have commenced, on his removal, in 1814, to Bedford, where, on the 29th of February in that year, he was elected physician to the Bedford Infirmary, in the room of Dr. Yeats, who had resigned. The next year witnessed another important event of his life, in his marriage with Miss Harden, the only daughter of Joseph Harden, Esq., of Northampton, an eminent surgeon and estimable man. From this period to 1823, there is little to record. Devoted to his profession, he pursued his course so as to gain the confidence of the public, which was manifested by his private practice soon exceeding that of his distinguished predecessor.

In 1823, the records of the Infirmary present the first evidences of those exertions by which Dr Thackeray, with enlightened views, sound judgment, ardent benevolence, exemplary zeal, unwearied diligence, and munificent liberality, pursued those purposes, to which his whole future life was devoted.

These exertions were directed to improving and extending the charity, so as to render its capabilities commensurate with the necessities of the suffering poor, and not only to supply the bodily wants of the objects of his commiseration, but to minister, also, to their spiritual welfare. To these endeavours his wife and her mother contributed by large donations, while he was liberally and efficiently seconded by the nobility and gentry of the county, who seem to have adopted all his suggestions, and to have supplied the means of carrying into effect all his designs. And it is gratifying to reflect that, however premature his fate, he yet lived long enough to witness the completion of all his benevolent purposes. Well might he, in the



contemplation of all he had so successfully achieved, exclaim, with conscious exultation, “ *jamque opus exegi*,” and well might his pure spirit, as he approached the verge of human existence, address its Maker in calm resignation and humble confidence, “ Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.”

The special objects which Dr. Thackeray had at heart, in his various endeavours for the improvement of the infirmary, were to enlarge its sphere, increase its accommodation, provide for the spiritual care of its inmates, by a permanent chaplaincy, establish a library and museum as an appendage to the hospital, and create a pension fund from which retiring allowances should be made to those servants who, having devoted their best years to the service of the institution, might, through age or infirmity, be reduced to want, when no longer able to labour for their support. Each of these objects received its just share of his regard, and he pursued each with those enlightened and benevolent views which so conspicuously characterised all his undertakings. Not content with enlarging the infirmary, so as greatly to increase its accommodations, he laboured to remove every restriction on admissibility, and finally effected his purpose, by having it declared a general hospital, open to all who should need its assistance.

Dissatisfied with the precariousness of gratuitous spiritual superintendence, he laboured to establish a fund from which a chaplain's stipend might be permanently derived. Wisely regarding a library and museum as legitimate objects of support by the charity itself, and as intimately connected with its best interests, he obtained from the governors an annual grant of £10 for their extension. Feeling that good servants merit and are entitled to humane consideration, when, through age or infirmity, they become incapable of further labour, and unwilling that such should be a

burden on the general funds of the charity, or liable to the uncertainties which any fluctuation in its income might occasion, he created a special fund, from which such retiring allowances as might be required for the attendants of the hospital, should be with certainty supplied. Of the propriety of all these purposes no doubt can be entertained, bearing, as they do, the impress of sound judgment and enlightened humanity. It is due both to the original projector and to those who so liberally contributed to accomplish all his benevolent designs, to record their fulfilment; and even this brief memorial may serve to extend the advantage, by suggesting to others how they may beneficially employ their time and means, and inciting them to "go and do likewise." There are few pursuits in life which impart a truer satisfaction, or contribute more to real happiness, than a judicious beneficence exercised for the relief of the poor. When directed by a devout spirit and benevolent heart, it raises the individual high in the scale of moral excellence, calls into activity all his nobler faculties, and so far as the imperfection of his nature admits, advances him towards that perfection to which, however unattainable in this world, all are directed to aspire. Such beneficence carries with it its own reward in the feelings inseparable from it; rich as he was in this source of enjoyment, Dr. Thackeray's life must have been a happy one; and if, in its progress it was, as it must have been, his lot to encounter the cares and crosses from which no one is wholly exempt, well might he sustain their pressure, supported, as he was, by the consciousness of duties faithfully performed, and by that best and only perfect solace which the Christian's faith ensures to all who sincerely endeavour to fulfil the commands of their Heavenly Master. It was not worldly fame to which Dr. Thackeray aspired, for he knew its worthlessness. It was not worldly riches which he sought, for the whole



course of his life proved that he valued them only for the uses to which he applied them, the relief of distress. The sums which he may be almost said to have lavished in the execution of his favourite plans and projects, were such as a worldly or avaricious spirit would never have so devoted.

It cannot be uninteresting to the readers of this slight sketch, to follow, in more minute detail, the course of his benevolent labours, and to view more distinctly the energy with which they were pursued, the munificence with which he contributed, from his own means, to their completion.

The Bedford Infirmary was first opened in 1803, and, consequently, it may be regarded as still in its infancy when Dr. Thackeray was elected its physician, in 1814. In 1803, the annual subscriptions were £56; in 1814, £928; in 1832, £1,484.

The report of 1814 exhibits only 323 patients for the year, being 161 in-patients, and 162 out. In 1822, the in-patients were 624, the out 1,002. From these amounts some conception may be formed of the extension of the charity which Dr. Thackeray was enabled to effect, for to his strenuous exertions must this extension be chiefly be attributed. In 1825, the annual subscriptions scarcely exceeded what they were ten years before, £955; yet, in 1826, they advanced to £1,296, and underwent, in each succeeding year, a progressive increase, until, in 1832, they reached £1,484.

It is illustrative of the natural bent of Dr. Thackeray's thoughts and feelings, that his earliest efforts in favour of the charity, were directed to providing for the spiritual wants of the patients, by the establishment of a chaplaincy fund. The first movement towards creating this fund, was the presentation of £100 by Mrs. Thackeray, given, as her letter to the governors states, "in humble acknowledgement of



God's mercies for her recovery from a long and protracted illness.' At the same time, Mrs. Thackeray, as a governor, suggested the expediency of forming a chaplaincy fund, in order that the poor patients of the infirmary should have the benefit of those religious consolations from which she had herself derived so much support. From this period, Dr. Thackeray laboured with great zeal and diligence, to effect the purpose which we may fairly presume he had himself first conceived. From his subsequent memorials, addressed, from time to time, to the governors of the hospital, it appears that, for several years, the spiritual wants of the hospital had been gratuitously supplied by the occasional ministry of clergymen in the vicinage, officiating in monthly rotation, but principally by the labours of one exemplary divine, who, as has been stated by Dr. Thackeray, had for a period of six years, and a sensible sacrifice of health, time and income, not only attended the sick poor of the hospital, whenever they needed his assistance, but also performed divine service, and preached a sermon at the hospital every Sunday. So deeply interested was this clergyman in the duty thus voluntarily exercised, that he declined undertaking a curacy in the neighbourhood, in order that he might continue his services to the patients of the hospital. These services were rendered until declining health compelled him, through incapability of the exertion required, to forego them.

The plan proposed by Dr. Thackeray for ensuring the advantages of a regular ministry, was to create a fund of £1,500, or as much as would yield an income of £50, for the endowment of a chaplaincy. To this fund Dr. Thackeray liberally contributed, a donation of £100 being presented by him, in aid of it, in 1824. It is gratifying to think that he had the satisfaction of witnessing the completion of his pious and benevo-

lent design, for, in December, 1831, a permanent chaplain was appointed, the fund having reached the amount required for supplying the necessary stipend.

The extension of the hospital was Dr. Thackeray's next care. He found the accommodations wholly inadequate to the wants of the poor, and, in 1825, he addressed a letter to the governors, urging them to extend the building. In 1826, a special meeting of governors was held, for the purpose of adopting this proposition, and carrying it into effect, and arrangements were, in consequence, made for erecting the additional buildings required. Contributions were liberally supplied, a distinguished individual having presented to the building fund the munificent donation of £2,000, being one-half the estimated expense. In 1828, the committee reported the completion of the additional buildings, and from a statement published in 1829, it appears that the amount contributed was £6,294, the building account £5,700, leaving a surplus of £594. Ere the building fund had reached the amount here stated, and while there existed an apprehension of a debt being contracted, in order to defray the expense of the new buildings, Dr. Thackeray enclosed to the committee a donation of £500 towards the prevention of debt, or the liquidation of any that might be incurred. In doing so he mentions that, of this sum, £300 had been a present made to him, by his mother-in-law, Mrs. Harden; that she fully approved his so disposing of it, and that, in consequence, he wished the £300 to be entered in the name of Mrs. Harden, a request which was accordingly complied with. In the report of the hospital for 1832, Dr. Thackeray's name appears, as a benefactor, to the extent of £1,200, independently of the sums entered in the names of Mrs. Thackeray and Mrs. Harden. The writer of this memoir has learned, from good authority, that the contributions made to the Bedford



Infirmary, by Dr. Thackeray and his immediate family, were not less than £2,500.

A further object of Dr. Thackeray was to annex to the infirmary a library and a museum. In this he sought not merely the benefit of the institution, but, with the enlarged and enlightened benevolence which characterised all his designs, he aimed at promoting the well-being of the whole community. Knowing how greatly the welfare of the community is dependent on the competency of their medical attendants; how incapable many of these are of possessing themselves of the necessary sources of information; how invaluable a well stored medical library is to numbers who possess not this advantage; how signally extension of knowledge, on their part, conduces to the benefit of all who need their services; his aim, in appending a library and museum to the hospital, was to extend the knowledge, and increase the efficiency, of the whole medical profession within its reach, and thus to repay to the benefactors of the charity, through the improvement in science of those to whom they resorted for medical aid, some equivalent for what they had devoted to the support of the charity. In all this Dr. Thackeray acted with sound intellect, correct judgment, and enlightened benevolence. It is an error to which even benevolent minds occasionally, through want of reflection, incline, to consider the sole end of public hospitals to be the relief of the sick poor, for whose use they are more immediately provided. The view is a narrow one which so regards them. Far higher and more extensive are the purposes for which they are available. Of charity, as of mercy, it may be truly said, that it is twice blessed; and no more signal instance of this retributive quality could be adduced, than that which public hospitals present. If, through their medium, the rich minister to the wants of the poor, an ample return is made in



that extension of medical science, and improvement of medical practice, to which public hospitals contribute far beyond what private practice, however extensive, can ever effect, and from which the rich ultimately benefit so signally.

In hospitals, the field of coincident observation is far wider ; opportunity is afforded for viewing, simultaneously, several instances of the same disease ; of noticing their similitudes and discrepancies ; of watching their progress so as to mark the ordinary and natural course of symptoms distinct from those contingencies which so often obscure them ; of observing the effects of remedies, and the power of sustaining their operation ; of thus determining what remedies are, in cases of emergency, most worthy of reliance. In hospitals, too, the law of the physician is more absolute ; his orders are punctually obeyed ; neither weakness nor perverseness counteracts his matured purpose, and thus, in hospital practice alone, perhaps, has he fair opportunity afforded him for proving of what his art is capable. It needs little reflection to see that observations of disease so made, must lead to more accurate discrimination, sounder judgment, and more efficient treatment than mere private practice, subject, as it is, to continual influences, tending to give it a wrong direction, can ever teach. From all this it follows that the knowledge acquired in hospital practice, extends its benefits far beyond the sphere of its immediate objects, repaying a ten-fold interest to those by whose liberality public hospitals are supported.

So fully did the governors of the Bedford Infirmary discern these truths, and concur in Dr. Thackeray's views, that in October, 1830, they voted an annual grant of £10 *from the funds of the hospital*, for the support and extension of the library and museum ; following, in this, the precedent of the Northampton

Infirmary, and furnishing an example which every hospital in the kingdom would do well to imitate. In 1829, Dr. Thackeray presented to the infirmary 400 volumes, part of his own library, to serve, as he said, as a nucleus for the formation of a *Bibliotheca Medica* for the use of the county and its neighbourhood. Libraries so formed should, of course, be accessible, under suitable regulations, to all medical men who might wish to resort to them. Dr. Thackeray had noticed, what all must have seen, the forlorn state of servants when incapacitated, either by age or infirmity, for continuing the exertions on which they depend for support. Their scanty earnings furnish but slight means of accumulation; these they either, through heedlessness, save not, or, as too often happens, they lose by fraud what they may have set apart. From this latter casualty they are now protected, by the admirable institution of savings banks; one of the greatest boons and wisest measures which the legislature of this country ever devised. Under either contingency, of not saving, or of losing what was accumulated, nay, with the utmost accumulations that the strictest economy and forethought could realise, the situation of the poor servant when superannuated, or enfeebled by disease, is oftentimes most deplorable. In many hospitals servants so circumstanced are provided with a retiring allowance. But this resource, though actually practised at the Bedford Infirmary, Dr. Thackeray prudentially distrusted. The general funds might not always be so prosperous as to allow it, and the executive board of the day might hesitate to allot it. To ensure the necessary provision for a claim so just and urgent, he devised the project of creating a special fund, from which retiring pensions should be supplied, proposing that the £600 surplus of the building fund should be devoted to this end; and, as he had designed for the infirmary a bequest of



£200, stating his readiness to be his own executor, by paying in this sum to the governors for the pension fund.

Expansive in his benevolence, influenced by that divine charity which makes no distinction where suffering humanity pleads for relief, Dr. Thackeray had often lamented the restrictions imposed on the admission of patients who could not substantiate a local claim. His heart panted to extend to all who were in need, the benefits of the charity which he administered. With this view he urged the governors to remove all limitation by constituting the infirmary a general hospital. He advocated this on the ground of justice, as Bedfordshire men were relieved at other hospitals; on the score of policy, as a wider range of contributions would more than counterbalance increase of expense. The plea of humanity was too obvious to need its being insisted on. Reluctant, however, to incur risk, in attempts to realise his speculative views, he prudently assigned conditions on which the change should be made. A certain amount of contribution to the permanent fund of the hospital; a certain extension of annual subscriptions from those residing on the borders of the county, or within the counties adjoining, were the stipulations suggested. They were adopted; the stipulations were fulfilled, and in August, 1831, the Bedford Infirmary was actually opened as a general hospital.

Thus all his projects were realised, and though it pleased Heaven to remove him at an early age, when the matured perfection of his powers held out the promise of a long career of active usefulness, he could bend in meek submission to the fiat of his Maker, with the soothing consciousness of not having lived in vain. With a singular felicity, such as few such extensive projectors attain, he lived to complete within a few brief years, every design which his benevolent



heart had planned, and as if through the special mercy of his God, he was not withdrawn until all his humane designs were fully consummated.

That he was withdrawn, was a source of deep and extensive sorrow, such as is rarely excited by the death of any individual, however eminent. It was not the outward show of mourning that was displayed, a tribute too often paid with little real feeling to supposed worth or imputed virtues, where both are taken on trust. It was the sorrow of the heart that pervaded both rich and poor, when Dr. Thackeray closed his earthly career. To all had he been endeared by those qualities which, issuing from the heart, find a responding feeling in every bosom. Callous, indeed, must that heart be which the sterling worth and overflowing benevolence of Dr. Thackeray would not have softened. And as human nature is ever true to the principles with which the great Creator has endued it; as worth pays to worth ever the tribute of its esteem, Dr. Thackeray did find amongst mankind those sympathies which he most prized. As one of his intimate friends expressed himself in a private letter to the writer of this brief and imperfect sketch "he was the idol of his friends, and at every house he was received with open arms." It could not be otherwise, for the elements of love and charity, so admirably blended in his dispositions, could produce no other results.

The esteem and regard entertained for Dr. Thackeray, throughout the county of Bedford, were no sudden impulse, no transient feeling. Three years before his death, they were manifested by a request conveyed to him, that he would sit for his picture. A subscription was opened to defray the expense, and, in order to afford opportunity for the numbers who pressed forward to give this testimony of affectionate attachment, the individual contribution was limited to

a guinea. In a very short period 370 subscriptions were received; the portrait was painted by the late Mr. Jackson, and it now forms an appropriate ornament of the infirmary which he so signally benefitted by his unwearied labours.

From his earliest years, the excellence of his disposition manifested itself in all the intercourses of life. It was signally marked by that disregard of self, that *abandon de soi meme*, which is the truest charm and surest attraction of human character. His venerable father, in his latter hours, bore testimony to his estimate of his son's worth, by saying, "when you are dying, my dear boy, may you have a son with a portion of your good qualities, and you will be happy."

Though engaged in extensive and lucrative practice, Dr. Thackeray freely rendered his gratuitous services to those who could make no pecuniary recompense; and not only was his personal attendance readily and assiduously given, but whatever was needed for giving effect to his medical directions, was liberally bestowed. One friend who knew intimately his most secret thoughts and actions, and whose connexion with the poor shewed him much of their domestic history, thus writes; "one would suppose, knowing the extent of Dr. Thackeray's practice, and his entire devotedness to his patients, that he would have had neither time nor inclination for any other purposes. This, however, was by no means the case. On the contrary, his private acts of kindness and benevolence were, I believe, more numerous than his most intimate friends had any conception of. There was not one with whom affliction had brought him in contact, to whom he could, in any way, be useful, but his head, his hand, and his heart were freely embarked in their cause. To the poor he was a constant and firm friend. He not only gave them his advice and diligent atten-



dance in their sicknesses, but whatever he thought necessary for them, if he had only any idea that they could not obtain it without difficulty and sacrifices, he invariably supplied their wants from his own purse and his own stores." Another friend who had every opportunity of witnessing Dr. Thackeray's daily habits, thus expresses himself. "His charity knew no bounds, and many have been the families that experienced relief at his hands, without their knowing from whom the bounty flowed."

After all that has been recorded in the foregoing pages, it would be superfluous to offer any remark on the genuine piety and pure Christian charity which distinguished this excellent man. The master passion of his mind was benevolence, but its exercise was guided and governed by those pure principles which Christian charity alone supplies. While his inward feelings impelled him to do good to others, and recompensed him for the exercise of humanity, to which his life was devoted, he had a still higher aim by which to steer his course in the deeply felt and earnest desire to render this acceptable to his Saviour and his God. The humility with which he regarded all his endeavours, was manifested in his dying hours, when on being reminded of his manifold charities and acts of beneficence, his reply was, "they are no ground of acceptance; my trust is in the merits of Jesus, who died for all mankind."

In literary tastes Dr. Thackeray was, by his course of education, well qualified to indulge, and in his hours of relaxation, he drew freely on his classical recollections. The impulse, however given by his benevolence, forced him on exertions and occupations which left no leisure for literary research; and it does not appear that he devoted much time either to general literature or general science. The same causes militated against his cultivating even the



science which he more immediately professed, so as to extend its boundaries by new discoveries or essential improvements.

Fully qualified to exercise his art for the advantage of those committed to his care, he discharged his duty to them with ability, diligence, and zeal; often with an excess of anxiety prejudicial to his own health. That he did not devote his energies more to the improvement of medical science, is no subject of blame, scarcely of regret. He could not do all, and it is difficult to imagine how his life could have been more usefully or meritoriously employed. The bent of his natural feelings determined the course of his exertions; his judgment seconded their dictates; and his religion taught him that the great aim of man, in his earthly sojourn, should be to do as much good as he could to his fellow creatures. So, if we may judge from his career of active benevolence, he must have thought; so, at least, he acted.

To social intercourse he was not disinclined, and, when his professional engagements permitted, he was ever cheerful and agreeable in the company of his friends.

In politics he maintained the most perfect independence, unbiassed by any motives of interest or ambition. Though he abstained from identifying himself with any local party or association, he did not hesitate to avow and maintain his political principles on all proper occasions. These were what are now termed liberal, and his confession of political faith is thus expressed by himself; "I am a convert from toryism to whigism, on the most thorough conviction of my understanding."

The record of Dr. Thackeray's life and character would be incomplete if we were to pass unnoticed a purpose, the latest, perhaps, which his benevolent feelings suggested, and which signally marks the

ruling passion strong even in death. Consistent to the last, his dying wish was that even his inanimate remains should be rendered useful to his fellow creatures; and with the energy which always impelled him to carry into effect what his mind conceived, he committed to paper his instructions, that, within twenty-four hours after his decease, his body should be removed to the hospital, and there subjected to anatomical examination, in the presence of all the medical men of Bedford and its neighbourhood,—to be afterwards restored to his friends for interment. In this injunction he had further in view, to abate, so far as his example could have effect, the senseless horror of such examination that so widely prevails, and by which, investigation of disease, through that process of enquiry by which alone facts the most important can be ascertained, is most injuriously obstructed. The letter containing these instructions was not found until a fortnight after his death; but, had it been discovered in sufficient time, the wish expressed in it would have been faithfully complied with.

It is gratifying to reflect, that however his townsmen might have differed from him, and from each other, on particular questions, they were unanimous in shewing their general esteem for his worth, by the honours paid to his remains. His funeral was numerously attended by all classes; the governors of the infirmary, the gentry of the county, and a large body of his friends, uniting to pay this last sad tribute of respect. Sermons were preached on the occasion, both by churchmen and dissenters; and the poor, in the unaffected grief which they displayed, gave unequivocal evidence of those grateful feelings which genuine kindness is ever sure to excite. For the lamented being over whom they mourned, the poor had ever entertained the highest veneration, and



of him it might be truly said, as of the Patriarch of old, *that when the ear heard him then it blessed him ; and when the eye saw him it gave witness to him, because he delivered the poor that cried, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of those that were ready to perish came upon him, and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.*

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